Universidade de Aveiro Departamento de Línguas e Culturas
2010

Rodrigo Viriato Ramos Calisto

A Procura de Identidade em *The Passion of New Eve* e *Sexing the Cherry*

Quest for the Self in *The Passion of New Eve* and in *Sexing the Cherry*

Universidade de Aveiro
2010

Departamento de Línguas e Culturas

Rodrigo Viriato Ramos Calisto

A Procura de Identidade em *The Passion of New Eve* e *Sexing the Cherry*

Quest for the Self in *The Passion of New Eve* and in *Sexing the Cherry*

Dissertação apresentada à Universidade de Aveiro para cumprimento dos requisitos necessários à obtenção do grau de Mestre em Estudos Ingleses, realizada sob a orientação científica da Doutora Maria Aline Salgueiro de Seabra Ferreira, Professora Associada do Departamento de Línguas e Culturas da Universidade de Aveiro.

I dedicate this masters' thesis to my parents Maria do Rosário Estêvão Ramos and António Nunes Vidal Branco, to my twin brother André Daniel Ramos Calisto, to my grandparents Adelina Estevam dos Santos Ferreira and Viriato Pereira Ramos and last but not least to my aunts Alda Maria Estêvão Ramos and Maria de Lurdes Estêvão Ramos. I also dedicate this work to my best friends Maria João dos Santos Barros and Lisandro Mendes Castro and to my classmates Dulce Paula Pimentel Biscaia and Maria Isaura Teixeira, amongst other people. Thank you so very much for your support during this academic research dissertation. You will always be deep inside my heart.

O júri

Presidente

Prof. Doutor Kenneth David Callahan
Professor Associado da Universidade de Aveiro

Prof. Doutora Margarida Isabel Esteves Silva Pereira
Professora Auxiliar do Instituto de Letras e Ciências Humanas da Universidade do Minho
(arguente)

Prof. Doutora Maria Aline Salgueiro de Seabra Ferreira
Professora Associada da Universidade de Aveiro
(orientadora)

Acknowledgements I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Maria Aline Salgueiro de Seabra Ferreira for her assistance since the very beginning of this work. Professor Aline helped me to expand my literary knowledge concerning the intertextual relationship between the novels analysed in this book. Furthermore, Professor Aline also greatly supported me beyond academic standards and encouraged me never to give up on my dreams. Thank you so very much for the life experience you shared with me. Where there is hope, there is a way.
Carpe Diem.

Palavras-chave

Angela Carter, Jeanette Winterson, Virginia Woolf, *The Passion of New Eve*, *Sexing the Cherry*, *Orlando*, procura de identidade, ambiguidade sexual, intertextualidade, feminismo, mudança de sexo, punição, picaresco, grotesco, fantástico/fantasia e mito.

Resumo

O presente trabalho propõe analisar a procura da identidade das personagens e a sua evolução ao longo das narrativas. Este livro é composto por uma introdução sobre as semelhanças e ligações intertextuais entre as obras e os géneros literários presentes nas obras, uma exposição sobre a evolução das personagens através do uso do conceito de Bildungsroman aliado ao conceito da procura de identidade e finalmente um capítulo sobre ambiguidade sexual.

Keywords

Angela Carter, Jeanette Winterson, Virginia Woolf, *The Passion of New Eve*, *Sexing the Cherry*, *Orlando*, quest for the self, gender ambiguity, intertextuality, feminism, gender metamorphosis, punishment, picaresque, grotesque, fantastic/fantasy and myth.

Abstract

The current work aims to analyse the characters' quest for the self and their process of growth throughout the narratives. This work is composed of an introduction on the similarities and the intertextual connections between the novels and the literary genres at issue, a chapter about the characters' self-development as related to the concept of Bildungsroman alongside the concept of quest narrative and finally a chapter about gender ambiguity.

Quest for the Self in *The Passion of New Eve* and in *Sexing the Cherry*

David and Bathsheba (The Bible No.1) 1956.

Table of Contents

Chapter I. – Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to compare Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve* and Jeanette Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry*. Both novels deal with, among other topics, the quest for the self, in which gender ambiguity is associated with psychological and physical changes achieved through a rite of passage. The protagonists of the two novels follow different paths but they have some points in common such as finding the purpose of their lives and above all encounter their inner self. These transformations are accompanied by personal growth that takes the form of a journey.

In *The Passion of New Eve* (1977), Evelyn is surgically turned into a woman who, in her *new body* (my italics), has to search for her identity beyond the physical. In *Sexing the Cherry* (1989), Jordan seeks his self through cross dressing, careful observation of women and during his voyage with Tradescant. It seems essential, then, to start with brief definitions about the literary genres in which both novels can be inscribed and their intertextual connections through the use of mythology, liturgical allusions and metaphors.

The Passion of New Eve was first published in 1977. Carter created a picaresque story in which the male oppressor is submitted to a series of difficult experiences in order to become more responsible as time goes on. Evelyn is searching for the woman of his dreams, Tristessa, who is a famous Hollywood actress. During his quest, he is metamorphosed into a woman on account of his bad conduct towards women.

This novel is intertextually connected with Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein: Or the Modern Prometheus* (1818), in which Shelley addresses a similar issue to do with the recreation of life and bodily

metamorphoses. She creates the creature as a mélange of pieces or patches from different corpses. This character is also born full-grown like Eve. The creature searches for knowledge in order to strengthen his spirit. His cruelty and murderous acts are committed as an act of revenge against his creator, who did not give him a name. At the end of the novel, the creature's reason to live is now gone when he discovers that Victor is dead.

In *The Passion of New Eve*, Evelyn is punished for his selfish acts and is transformed into a woman. This aspect can be linked with Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which the author presents Tiresias, who does not respect nature and its manifestations. As a result, he is severely punished by his acts and has to give proofs in order to regain the gods' favour.

Some of these metamorphic aspects perceived in the above mentioned works are present in Virginia Woolf's novel *Orlando*, whose central character also goes through a process of gender transformation. Orlando's self remains undamaged and the adoption of his physical self is almost immediate. This is the central element of Carter's adjustment to the theme of the search for identity, a standard of second wave feminism.

Orlando was published in 1928 and it is dedicated to Woolf's lover Vita Sackville-West. The author gives evidence of this statement in her diary:

> One of these days. . . I shall sketch here, like a grand historical picture the outlines of all my friends. I was thinking of this in bed last night, & for some reason I thought I would begin with sketch of Gerald Brenan. There may be something in this idea. I might be a way of writing the memoirs of

> one's own times during people's lifetimes. It might be a most amusing book. The question is how to do it. Vita [Sackville-West] should be a young noble man. . . (Woolf, 1977: 156-157).

This significant passage indicates that Woolf wanted to write about her most valuable friends, including Vita Sackville-West, also a writer. Woolf further explains:

> If my pen allowed, I should now try to make out a work table, having done my last article for the Tribune, & now being free again. And instantly the usual exciting devices enter my mind: a biography beginning in the year 1500 & continuing to the present day, called Orlando: Vita; only with a change about from one sex to another. I think, for a treat, I shall let myself dash this in for a week. . . (Woolf: 1977, 161).

Orlando is no doubt Woolf's *declaration of love* (my italics) to Vita. The author explores Orlando's thoughts, feelings, and reflections based on her lover's life. Vita was a noble woman, just like the character Orlando. The Sackville family has its roots in the sixteenth century[1]; therefore it is clear that Woolf wanted to share important facts about Vita's heritage. There is a strong desire to transform an impossible relationship to a sort of fairy tale, Orlando's rite of passage. Woolf was willing to share her forbidden love with the rest of the world, knowing this feeling would not be accepted by her family and friends. Woolf was a scholar who knew a great deal about mythology and paganism. This

[1] More information on this statement can be found on Vita Sackville-West's work titled *Family History,* published in 1990.

assumption is supported by the rich intertextuality that was used to create and substantiate the protagonist's gender.

The adventures of Orlando are intimately related with the search for the self. In order to strengthen her character of all prejudice and possible disillusion of her sudden metamorphosis, she goes on a trip with a gypsy clan.

Carter adapted this metamorphosis into *The Passion of New Eve*. However, the rite of passage is slightly different. The main protagonist is presented as psychologically ill. The author develops a subverted mixture of pagan and Christian elements in order to vanquish evil and disbelief. The title of the novel satirises the world dominated by men and the masculine figures of the Christian holy trinity.

The author addresses the concept of conceiving without male assistance through parthenogenesis. However, this procedure is not accomplished, because Eve is not mentally prepared for it and runs away from Beulah, never to return.

Winterson also explores the notion of giving life without masculine interference in her novel *Sexing the Cherry* published in 1989. The title is associated with the grafting of cherry trees. This process is made without seeds and pollination; the tree is grafted in its branches in order to improve the quality of the cherry. A single vegetative sprout is implanted onto the rootstock which will grow into a new branch. This is what Jordan puts in plain words to his adoptive mother and she replies that this process is awkward and generates confusion:

> My mother, when she saw me patiently trying to make a yield between a Polstead Black and a Morello, cried two things: 'Thou mayest as well try to

> make a union between thyself and me by sewing us at the hip,' and then, 'Of what sex id that monster you are making?'
>
> I tried to explain to her that the tree would still be female although it had no been born from seed, but she said such things had no gender and were a confusion to themselves.
>
> 'Let the world mate of its own accord,' she said, 'or not at all.'
>
> But the cherry grew, and we have sexed it and it is female (Winterson: 2001, 78-79).

In this conversation between the two characters, it is explicit that the cherry is the substitute object to Jordan's own desire to become a "perfect" human being. He also wishes to become a hero like Tradescant, the King's gardener:

> What I would like is to have some of Tradescant grafted on to me so that I could be a hero like him. He will flourish in any climate, pack his ships with precious things and be welcomed with full honours when the King is restored.
>
> England is a land of heroes, every boy knows that (Winterson: 2001, 79).

As in Carter's *The Passion of New Eve*, Winterson describes a process of psychological transformation. One of the main characters, alongside Dog Woman, is Jordan, whom she found on the bank of the Thames. Jordan grows up surrounded by women. He becomes intrigued with the idea of using feminine clothes and with women's condition. He begins to dress himself like a woman. In his dreams, Jordan is joined with the twelve dancing princesses and he endeavours to grasp as many details

as possible to strengthen his spirit. Jordan and the Dog Woman each start their journey searching for happiness, to find their inner selves.

On his voyage with Tradescant, Jordan comes into contact with many different people and tribes like the Hopi. In his search for knowledge, he is taught about the notion of time. The Hopi use their language without differentiating the time tenses, which indicates that time is linear and endless. One can redeem oneself during one's lifetime. There is always hope to acquire happiness.

Undoubtedly related to Woolf's *Orlando*, Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* borrows this linear temporal definition from Benjamin Lee Whorf's theory on the Hopi language. Whorf analysed it and its rules as a promising validation for his linguistic relativity principle, an assumption that indicates a probable influence of the grammatical system of a specific language on the thought and world view of its speakers. Whorf concludes that the Hopi language lacked all references to time (Carroll: 57-8).

Woolf's *Orlando* explores the issue of the human awareness of the fluidity of time and the manner in which perception alters the sense of time. In *Orlando*, the protagonist's thoughts are reminiscent of Whorf's relativity principle:

> But Time, unfortunately, though it makes animals and vegetables bloom and fade with amazing punctuality, has no such simple effect upon the mind of man. The mind of man, moreover, works with equal strangeness upon the body of time. An hour, once it lodges in the queer element of the human spirit, may be stretched to fifty or a hundred times its clock length; on the other hand, an hour may be accurately represented on the timepiece of the mind by one second (Woolf: 1993, 69).

> For while directly we say that it [the length of human life] is ages long, we are reminded that it is briefer than the fall of a rose leaf to the ground (Woolf: 1993, 69-70).

Sexing the Cherry also has an intertextual connection with T. S. Eliot's poem *Four Quartets* that explores the passage of time:

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future,
> And time future contained in time past.
> If all time is eternally present
> All time is unredeemable.
> What might have been is an abstraction
> Remaining a perpetual possibility
> Only in a world of speculation.
> What might have been and what has been
> Point to one end, which is always present (Eliot: 175).

The poet explores the fluidity of time, suggesting that to redeem something means to recover it. Eliot states that one cannot get something back in time, because it is unredeemable, since time is unchangeable for mortals and God is omnipotent and omniscient. Winterson gives special importance to these ideas and transfers them to Jordan, who must find a way in his life during the time that is given to him.

The sentence "time present and time past are both perhaps present in time future" implies that one's past and present lives persist

into to the future. Winterson reflects about this assumption in *Sexing the Cherry*:

> *Lies 1*: There is only the present and nothing to remember.
>
> *Lies 2*: Time is a straight line.
>
> *Lies 3*: The difference between the past and the future is that one has happened while the other has not (Winterson: 2001, 83).

Taking these ideas into account, Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* can be considered as a good example of "historiographic metafiction"[2] (Andermahr: 68) because it merges its chronological scenery (the English Civil War and the Interregnum) with a fantastic narrative that comprises subversive fairy tales. According to Susana Onega, this concept is considered as a "paradoxical type of postmodernist novel that combines self-reflexivity with history" (Onega: 76).

Winterson states in her essay "A Work of my Own", she is not unaware of the use of the chronological facts in her novels. She is using these elements intentionally to generate an alternative realism:

> I have twice used the device of history, not because I am interested in Costume Drama Realism, or Magic Realism or any other Realism but because I wanted to create an imaginative reality sufficiently at odds with our daily reality to startle us out of it (Winterson: 1996, 188).

Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* is also influenced by Woolf's *Orlando* in terms of narrative time references. Woolf's novel starts in the sixteenth century and Winterson's narrative begins in the seventeenth

[2] Linda Hutcheon was probably the first critic to theorize the concept of historiographic metafiction.

century and the respective protagonists, Jordan and Orlando, face a rite of passage in order to find a valuable purpose in life. Their lifespan is extended to the twentieth century.

In a nutshell, both Carter and Winterson pay a tribute to Woolf and to her literary intertextual connections in *Orlando*, a fundamental intertext in Carter and Winterson's novels in terms of their treatment of androgyny, gender ambiguity and the quest for the self. Their characters show a deep concern for their purpose in life; they wish to acquire happiness and most of all find their identity in its sexual, social and personal dimensions.

Both works share a very rich intertextual connection; for instance, Winterson's "Gift of Wings" is closely linked with Carter's *Libretto – Orlando: or, The Enigma of Sexes*. It is significant to show Carter's and Winterson's debt to Woolf by means of a comparison between the two essays, which will be carried out later in this paper.

A. The Fantastic/ Fantasy

The fantastic is a literary term that includes a variety of other genres. This term was coined by Bulgarian scholar Tzvetan Todorov in his work *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* published in 1975. The author describes the fantastic as being an intermediary state between the supernatural and the marvellous. According to Todorov:

> The fantastic requires the fulfilment of three conditions. First, the text must oblige the reader to consider the world of the characters as a world of living persons and to hesitate between a natural or supernatural explanation of the events described. Second, this hesitation may also be experienced by a character; thus the reader's role is so to speak entrusted to a character, and at the same time the hesitation is represented, it becomes one of the themes of the work -- in the case of naive reading, the actual reader identifies himself with the character. Third, the reader must adopt a certain attitude with regard to the text: he will reject allegorical as well as "poetic" interpretations (Todorov: 33).

A fantastic work leaves the reader with a sense of confusion about it and whether or not the events really happened in the fictional world. Todorov compares this statement with two other ideas: the uncanny, wherein the observable fact turns out to have rational evidence, or the marvellous, where there truly is a supernatural reason for the phenomenon (Todorov: 33).

The fantastic genre has gained significant attention nowadays, partly because of the appearance of numerous films based on utopian, epic and mythological fantastic novels, which have made these concepts

known to a large audience. The public usually feels connected to this genre, because of its wondrous and marvellous characteristics. The reader/viewer is brought into a story and identifies with some of the characters of the plot that go into the world to find their inner self.

Based on a definition by the feminist scholar and writer Joanna Russ, fantasy is a voyage of psychological growth by an explorer and perhaps the person who is reading to a world so astounding and amazing that the adventurer desires to dwell in such a fantastic place. Fantasy is fantasy because it contravenes the real and violates it (Russ: 1995, 16). The real world is constantly implicit in fantasy. This concept clearly suggests the difference between reality and myth, presenting fantasy as a violation of reality. Therefore, this literary genre represents "what cannot happen" and is understood to bear a reverse relation to what exists (Russ: 1995, ibidem). Russ further explains:

> "The frame of fantasy indicates the relation between fantasy and actuality: actuality is the frame, fantasy (*what could not have happened*) exists inside the frame". We begin in actuality and move into fantasy; the segment of segments of "realism" exists in the story as a standard by which to measure the fantasy (for example, the elaborate preface to J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of Rings*) (Russ: 1995, 21).

The wondrous aspect of the scene that is being read further inflects on the person who reads almost every single detail that is presented in the descriptions given by the authors. John Grant and John Clute argue that fantasy inserts fantastic elements in a plausible scenario. As they suggest, the fantastic "it may occur entirely in a fantasy world

setting, where such elements are part of the world" (Grant and Clute: 338).

Fantasy can also create narratives in which the story is deconstructed or subverted. Rosemary Jackson describes fantasy as the literature of subversion and she states that:

> . . . each fantastic text functions differently, depending on its particular historical placing, and its different ideological, political and economic determinants, but the most subversive fantasies are those which attempt to *transform* the relations of the imaginary and the symbolic. They try to set up possibilities for radical cultural transformation by making fluid relations between these realms, suggesting, or projecting, the dissolution of the symbolic through violent reversal or rejection of the process of the subject's formation (Jackson: 91).

Jackson sees the subversive ability of fairy tales with some reservations because they belong more to the literature of the marvellous and tend to discourage the reader's involvement. Instead of contravening the principles of the real world, they question themselves only in retrospect (Jackson: 33).

The fantastic/fantasy elements create an appropriate atmosphere to introduce characters and environments. This is essential for the author to authenticate his/her imaginary scenarios as they are visualized in the mind of the reader. Ovid, Carter, Winterson and Woolf create an impression that their protagonists were subjugated to some kind of revenge or punishment by some mistake or sin. This transformation indicates that some kind of psychological deformity was in order and that

it had to be stopped for the sake of humankind. Eve(lyn) and Tiresias' first impression is based on disgust towards their new condition/gender. At first, the main character of each novel feels insecure and unsatisfied with the sudden change, but he/she must persevere with his/her new condition and live with it until the end of his/her days. There is always an opportunity of redemption, as in the case of Tiresias, that was punished for his disrespecting behaviour by Hera and Athena.

Todorov indicates that metamorphosis is a supernatural element, consequently a fantastic phenomenon. He also says that this change is a transgression and it is related to the division involving the subject and the intellect:

> The metamorphoses . . . constitute a transgression of the separation between matter and mind as it is generally conceived. It should be observed also that is no break between the apparently conventional imagery of . . . nineteenth-century writers (Todorov: 113).

Todorov also says that:

> The fantastic started from a perfectly natural situation to reach its climax in the supernatural. "The Metamorphosis" starts from a supernatural event, and during the course of the narrative gives it an increasingly natural atmosphere – until at the end, the story has gone as far as possible from the supernatural. Thereby all hesitation becomes useless: its function had been to prepare the way for the perception of the unheard-of event, and to characterize the transition from natural to supernatural (Todorov: 171).

According to Warner the concept of metamorphosis is somehow related with magic and myth. Warner indicates that:

> . . . metamorphosis is the principle of organic vitality as well as the pulse in the body art. This concept lies at the heart of the classical and other myths, and governs the practice and scope of magic; it also, not coincidentally, runs counter to notions of unique, individual integrity in the Judaeo-Christian tradition (Warner: 2002, 2).

Warner also states that:

> . . . Ovidian metamorphosis belongs to the vast, biological scheme of things, occupying a universal plane in cosmic time and catching up human lives into its timeless and vast perspective. It expresses eternal flux, a prevailing law of mutability and change (Warner, 2002, 4).

The fantastic literary genre stresses ambiguity. Todorov notes that:

> . . . the character has not entirely decided what interpretation to give to events. . . Ambiguity also results from the use of two stylistic devices with suffuse the entire text: imperfect tense and modalization (Todorov: 38).

As stated before, the marvellous is associated with a supernatural cause for a detailed scene. Therefore, the aim of this literary sub-genre is far from being just to entertain, or about curiosity and

emotions. Its main goal is to illustrate a journey of "the total exploration of universal reality" (Todorov: 57).

The uncanny only works with one of the conditions of the fantastic, the report of certain reactions, mainly fear. It is distinctively correlated to the psychological state of the characters of the plot and not to a material event challenging rationality.

In the case of the supernatural, the phenomenon is explained at the end of the narrative. This sub-genre deals with two central aspects: "the existence of the supernatural and a series of explanations" (Todorov: 45). In the first aspect there is a sense that the supernatural occurrence has never happened, giving evidence that it was only a dream or based on insanity symptoms. The other element gives special importance to the rational explanation of coincidences, traps, illusions:

> This definition is . . . vague and broad but so is the genre which it describes: the uncanny is not a delimited genre, unlike the fantastic. More precisely, it is limited on just one side, that of the fantastic; on the other, it dissolves into the general field of literature. . .
>
> According to Freud, the sense of the uncanny is linked to the appearance of an image which originates in the childhood of the individual or the race. . . The literature of horror in its pure state belongs to the uncanny. . . (Todorov: 47).

In a nutshell, it is extremely difficult to give precise definitions of the fantastic genre and its sub-genres, as Todorov indicates:

The fantastic in its pure state is represented here by the median line separating the fantastic-uncanny from the fantastic-marvellous. This line corresponds perfectly to the nature of the fantastic, a frontier between two adjacent realms (Todorov: 44).

B. The Picaresque

The picaresque genre was firstly used in Diego Hurtado de Mendoza's[3] novel titled *Lazarillo de Tormes* published in 1555 and in Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* published in 1615. This Spanish literary genre explores comic and burlesque stories of a scoundrel in his/her quest for the self.

This genre is generally regarded "as an historical phenomenon, or it is viewed in terms of an ideal form or type" (Bjornson: 4); both approaches have their disadvantages because "both must somehow resolve the difficult problems of defining a category which has no *a priori* existence and or determining which works legitimately belong in the category" of the picaresque (Bjornson: 4-5). These inconsistent characteristics can be applied to works written before 1550 and after 1750, when the genre acquired its recognizable identity. If these values are used in opposition, they cannot be considered as part of the picaresque fiction, because what really matters is the insertion of a dynamic model adequately flexible to include "the unique individual works and their historical contexts" (Bjornson: 5) while plainly identifying the elements that are shared to substantiate "their insertion in the same category" (Bjornson: 5). Bjornson also describes this literary genre as:

> . . . a synthetic, somewhat arbitrary label for a collection of works which critics and scholars have retrospectively grouped together on the basis of rather vaguely delineated similarities. In broad general terms, it is usually employed to describe episodic, open-ended narratives in which lower-class

[3] This author is described as the true writer of *Lazarillo de Tormes* by the Spanish palaeographer Mercedes Agulló in her work *A Vueltas con El Autor Del Lazarillo: Con el Testamento y el Inventario de Bienes de Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza* published in 2010.

> protagonists sustain themselves by means of their cleverness and adaptability during an extended journey through space, time, and various predominantly corrupt social milieux (Bjornson: 4).

Picaresque novels are narrated in the first-person as "genuine autobiographies" (Bjornson: 7); this aspect is central in Carter's *The Passion of New Eve*, in which Evelyn reflects about his acts before and after his metamorphosis. His statements reveal disillusionment while escaping from his responsibilities.

Winterson also uses this aspect to dramatize Jordan's self searching. The character lives in the corrupted and polluted city of London, where Protestants and Catholics fight against themselves. He does not fit in this scenario and therefore he seeks knowledge elsewhere.

According to Richard Bjornson, the picaresque genre presents a wide overview of types and circumstances of human life implied by the nature of myth, in opposition to the alleged events of an autobiography or chronicle. The picaresque myth works as one's inevitable encounter with the external reality and the act of cognition which precedes and shapes his/her "attempts to cope with a dehumanizing society" (Bjornson: 11).

The most accurate picaresque novels are not patchwork collections of randomly selected episodes, as mostly claimed. It is impossible to write from *ex nihilo*. These works are subordinated to a narratorial perception that explores the human condition deriving from "the traditional opposition between comic and the serious" (Bjornson: 8).

Some picaresque characters are portrayed as heroes/heroines that can "attain wealth and psychological well-being" (Bjornson: 3). Nevertheless, there is also the opposite version, wherein these characters

may be seen as villains that "cannot possibly escape a "double-bind" situation in which they are compelled to choose between survival and integrity" (Bjornson: 3); this last statement can be associated with Evelyn in his earlier life that turned out to be abusive and mischievous in relation to women's feelings.

Carter used this literary genre widely throughout her works including *The Passion of New Eve* (1977) and *Nights at the Circus* (1984). Carter explores Evelyn's choice between survival and honesty. This voyage is taken by an ill-behaved character that was corrupted by a ruined society. As a consequence, he has to face many trials to succeed in his pursuit for happiness.

Winterson also presents a degraded society corrupted by religion and a rotten and polluted setting, which suggests a grotesque scenario. Jordan must face his own fears in order to carry on his quest for answers and to rejoice with his ambiguous sexuality. The Dog Woman also has to face many obstacles before her kindness and humanity. Both characters share the need for a sustained and peaceful environment can be acknowledged. They trace different paths throughout the novel but at the end of their journeys, they are joined together with self-confidence.

In a nutshell, the Picaresque hero/heroine wanders from one place to another, meeting many different people, from whom he/she learns about the difference between good and evil, aspects that apply to the protagonists in *The Passion of New Eve* and *Sexing the Cherry*.

In difficult circumstances, when facing "rootlessness and poverty" (Bjornson: 11), the hero/heroine is "invariably confronted by a choice between social conformity (which is necessary for survival) and adherence" (Bjornson: ibidem) to what he/she learned to consider true or

honourable. This attitude reflects "an author's implicit conceptions about the self and the fictional universe in which people become aware of themselves" (Bjornson: 11) as individuals. The scholar substantiates his assertions:

> . . . the self is frequently depicted in the traditional manner as an inherent "nature" which is tested and revealed for what it is during the course of the hero's fictional adventures" (Bjornson: ibidem).

For example, in *The Passion of New Eve*, Evelyn is taken to Beulah, where a new start is offered to him, but the hero does not yet recognize friends or foes. He is metamorphosed and is not aware of the true nature of such surgical intervention. After escaping from Mother, Eve is abducted by Zero, who is certainly a foe, with whom she incorrectly learns to act like a woman. Ultimately, she is constantly raped and finds it despicable and cruel. Eve does not give up on her dreams; she manages to escape with Tristessa, who is killed during their stay in the desert. At the end of the novel, Eve understands why she had to go through many difficulties; she realises that she was searching for herself as a woman. She finally embraces womanhood with joy.

In *Sexing the Cherry*, Jordan has to face many dilemmas and find his life purpose. Through many of his journeys with Tradescant, he understands the need for a sexual defined body and most of all to place himself in society. While dreaming, his subconscious leads him to the world of fairy tales and consequently he tries to place his own story as the twelfth fairy tale; while meeting Fortunata, a dancing princess, Jordan understands that he must explore both genders in order to embrace

happiness once and for all. While writing in his logbook, he reflects about his fears and anxieties, what makes him weak at heart; when he gets home, he metaphorically finds himself through the mist.

C. The Grotesque

The expression *the grotesque* to refer to the literary genre was first used by Rabelais in his novel *Gargantua*, first published in 1532. The modern concept is based on Mikhail Bakhtin's book *Rabelais and his World* published in 1965. In this literary work the author presents a definition of the genre based on the disharmony of the body and the effects that are motivated by such physical description.

Characters are usually considered grotesque if they induce both empathy and disgust. Grotesque characters can sometimes be more worthy than conventional ones; the intention is usually to prove that one tends to judge by appearance, instead of looking for the personality beneath. This duality between outward repulsiveness and inward attractiveness is the centre of, for instance, the well known fairy tale *Beauty and the Beast*.

The nature of the grotesque is based on what is exaggerated and it tries to caricature the negative elements of body, the inappropriate ones (Bakhtin: 306).

Through the use of the grotesque body in his novels, Rabelais related political conflicts to human physiology. In the author's fiction, the human body is a theatre of transformation. His art ignores the body's smooth surface and focuses on its convexities, exaggerated muscles and its orifices: the gaping mouth, breasts, sexual organs, loins and anus:

> To degrade also means to concern oneself with the lower stratum of the body, the life of the belly and reproductive organs. . . Degradation digs a bodily grave for a new birth; it has not only a destructive, negative aspect, but also a regenerating one. . . . Grotesque realism knows no other lower

> level; it is the fruitful earth and the womb. It is always conceiving (Bakhtin: 21).

Bakhtin also adds:

> The grotesque body is constantly active, exceeding its margins: a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed: it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body (Bakhtin: 19).

These aspects are present in Winterson's Dog Woman. This protagonist seems hideous and monstrous, but it does not give her a personality deficiency. In order to become inaccessible to harm, the protagonist tries to overcome her hideous figure with love for Jordan. She also enjoys chatting with her neighbours and messing with and beating all those who threaten and make fun of her.

Mother, whose name directly addresses creation and fertility in Carter's *The Passion of New Eve*, is also described as a horrid creature, having dark skin and eight breasts. The author presents some features that are all used with the purpose of showing exaggerated scenes and characters. Bakhtin explains that:

> Exaggeration, hyperbolism, excessiveness are generally considered and fundamental attributes of the grotesque style . . . exaggeration in the grotesque acquires an extreme, fantastic character (Bakhtin: 303, 306).

As Bakhtin further maintains:

> The exaggeration of the inappropriate to incredible and monstrous dimensions is, according to Schneegans, the basic nature of the grotesque. Therefore, the grotesque is always satire. Where there is no satirical orientation there is no grotesque. From this definition Schneegans deduces all the peculiarities of Rabelais' images and verbal style: excessiveness, superabundance, the tendency to transgress all limits, endless enumerations, and accumulations of synonyms (Bakhtin: 306).

Mother resembles Artemis the goddess of chastity, the moon, hunt, forests and hills, who is mostly represented with dark skin and numerous breasts. According to Bernard Evslin, this goddess was regarded as one of the most venerated of the ancient Greek deities and therefore, she was one of the main figures to be honoured by mortals. Artemis has been represented throughout history in literature, painting and sculpture. Louise Bourgeois (1911 – 2010), a French artist and sculptor was influenced by Artemis' rounded forms. Some of her works of art show several curved elements like breasts and big bellies, showing evidence of fertility and wealth. Some statues of Artemis by Bourgeois are represented in dark coloured skin. This distinctive element was used by Carter to create both Mother and Leilah, suggesting that it is a central element in this comparison.

Bakhtin further explains:

> In grotesque realism…the bodily element is deeply positive. It is presented not in a private, egotistic form, severed from the other spheres of life, but as something universal.... As such it is opposed to severance from the

> material and bodily of the world; it makes no pretence to renunciation of the earthy or independence of the earth and the body (Bakhtin: 306).

> The leading themes of these images of bodily life are fertility, growth, and a brimming-over abundance....The material bodily principle is a triumphant, festive principle, it is a 'banquet for all the world" (Bakhtin: 36).

The Dog Woman, for instance, in exhibiting her lower bodily parts in amusing festivities can be inscribed in this nexus of ideas pertaining to the grotesque, carnivalesque body.

The grotesque is also crucially engaged with the process of physical degradation:

> The essential principle of grotesque realism is degradation, that is, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity (Bakhtin: ibidem).

Once Bakhtin has reached the centrality of degradation in terms of the aesthetics of grotesque realism, the other elements become obvious.

The Dog Woman is the typical grotesque image of sweating that plays a leading role in *Sexing the Cherry*. Grotesque habits show disgusting activities that are fundamental for the characters rite of passage and for the creation of an entire new body:

> Eating, drinking, defecation and other elimination (sweating, blowing of the nose, sneezing), as well as copulation, pregnancy, dismemberment,

> swallowing up by another body - all these acts are performed on the confines of the body and the outer world, or on the confines of the old and new body. In all events, the beginning and end of life are closely linked and interwoven (Bakhtin: 26).

> The gaping mouth, the protruding eyes, sweat, trembling, suffocation, the swollen face – all these are symptoms of the grotesque life of the body (Bakhtin: 308).

These last statements point to the connection of the grotesque characteristics with the growing process of Winterson's Dog Woman. This character is hideous and disgusting, but at the same time she is always ready for copulating and all other activities concerning amusing moments:

> I lifted Jordan up and I told Johnson that if he didn't throw back his cloth and let us see this wonder I'd cram his face so hard into my breasts that he'd wish he'd never been suckled by a woman, so truly would I smother him.
>
> He started humming and hawing and reaching for some coloured jar behind his head, and I thought, he'll not let no genie out on me with its forked tongue ad balls like jewels, so I grabbed him and started to push him into my dress. He was soon coughing and crying because I haven't had that dress off in five years (Winterson: 2001, 12).

Evelyn's body is also carnivalized, to use Bakhtin's words, created as grotesque because it is associated with a process of turning into somebody else.

Humankind has always tried to imitate the gods' creation of the world. It is clearly shown that these representations are used in order to fictionally and metaphorically supplant the marvellous creations of universe.

Chapter II. – Quest for the Self

The fantastic/fantasy, the picaresque and the grotesque, combined in one literary work, create the required elements to inflect different motifs and shifts into the narrative, giving a very rich view of the story that is being told. The marvellous and uncanny are implicitly present in order to authenticate the voyage of the main characters. Thus, it is imperative to present an analysis about the leading characters' process of growth.

The characters' development is obtained through the use of a quest narrative that is a journey of a hero/heroine in search of something, but to achieve his/her goal, he/she must face all kinds of tests and trials; the most important thing for him/her is to accomplish his/her task. A quest narrative[4] resembles a rite of passage, so that one can return from the edge of the void or hell itself with some valuable lessons learned. In this ambit, it is very important to understand that the self is not contained so easily in one place or time; it is acquired during one's lifetime.

According to Steven Walker's work on Carl Jung's theory about the conscious and the unconscious, the self can create diverse images that "correspond to some degree with those concerning the ultimate source of self-consciousness in Eastern mystical thought" (Walker: 84). These images of the self are frequently provoked by a severe trauma and its significance is called "the wholeness of the personality" (Walker: 84).

In his work *The Undiscovered Self* (1958) Jung presents the veil between the conscious (the "real" world) and the unconscious (one's dreams). These two projections of the self create the process of

[4] Some scholars have devoted considerable time to these quests, such as Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

individualization and therefore one's personality. These representations symbolise a challenge to which individuals must react to for one's own sake as well as for the good of humankind (Jung: 15). Jung describes the self as the prototype of harmony and a marital combination of opposed halves.

According to Murray Stein, the self is far beyond the common subjectivity-objectivity division. Stein cites Jung for an unambiguous explanation:

> For Jung, the self is paradoxically *not* oneself. It is more than one's subjectivity, and its essence lies beyond the subjective realm. The self [instead] forms the ground for the subject's commonality with the world, with the structures of Being. In the self, subject and object, ego and other are joined in a common field of structure and energy (Stein: 152).

Therefore, one's quest is vague and it demands strength of character that must be acquired during his/her journey. Quest narratives tend to be gloomy and to induce very long adventures, in which the protagonists must find their way through the steam. At first the narrative flow seems to be obscure and meaningless. The reader becomes aware of different stages that must be surpassed.

Some characters tend to go through physical and psychological changes. This growth process has been described as both "an apprenticeship to life" (Frank: 124) and a "search for meaningful existence within society" (Frank: 124). In this kind of narrative, the central character has to face great obstacles so that he/she can achieve his/her main goal. The narrative progresses and gives clues about the state of

psychological illness and is based on the idea that there is something to be gained from it (Frank: 124-125). Arthur Frank also states that:

> Illness is the occasion of a journey that becomes a quest. What is quested for may never be wholly clear, but the quest is defined by the ill person's belief that something is to be gained through the experience (Frank: 115).

However, illness is just a symptom of the characters' need for growth; in this context we can refer to another literary genre, the Bildungsroman. This genre is based on the process of growth of a character throughout a novel. This concept was first described by the German philologist Johann Carl Simon Morgenstern at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is basically a story of a single individual's growth and maturity within the context of a defined social order (Morgenstern: 55-72).

The Bildungsroman "or novel of formation" (Abel et al: 4) interrelates many "factors, including class, history and gender" (Abel et al: 4). Development theories tend to give prominence to certain elements at the expense of others, offering the density of form needed to indicate the interrelationships shaping individual growth.

Nevertheless, traditionally gender was not included as a relevant category within the study of the Bildungsroman. The sex of the protagonist alters every aspect of this genre: "its implied psychology, its representation of social pressures" (Abel et al: 5). Therefore, by exploring fictional scenarios of female growth, it combines "gender with genre" and it idiosyncratically helps to identify the female versions of the genre (Abel et al: 5). It is essential that the standard definitions are adjusted to both

genders. When a specific plot is being analysed, the main features of the typical genre are inevitably described in the male perspective. Abel also states that:

> Female fictions of Development reflect the tensions between the assumptions of a genre that embodies male norms and the values of its female protagonists. The heroine's developmental course is more conflicted, less direct . . . The death in which these fictions so often culminate represent less development failures than refusals to accept an adulthood that denies profound convictions and desires (Abel et al: 11).

Identifying the "influence of gender" on the growth of the self and "its social opportunities" helps to trace some distinctive and dynamic characteristics "of women's developmental fiction" and its thematic tensions (Abel et al: 11). "Two narrative patterns predominate": the chronological "apprenticeship" from childhood to adulthood, that is adapted from the male version of the genre and "the awakening" of the heroine, which does not occur conventionally, because "development does not proceed gradually from stage to stage" (Abel et al: ibidem). Firstly, protagonists grow mainly after achieving in their fairy tale happy ending and secondly, growth may be limited to brief moments. The transformations are mainly internal and they lead to the anagnorisis which is often substituted by "the continuous unfolding of an action" (Abel et al; 12).

The Bildungsroman embodies the "Goethean model of organic growth" (Abel et al: 5) that tends to be cumulative, continuous and total. This transformation is based on the Enlightenment notion that indicates

that one may achieve social integration through a process of maturity and harmony (Abel et al: 17).

Although gender has been neglected, it has been included in studies of the picaresque. As noted previously, this genre is usually narrated by a male character and explores the journey of a mischievous hero in a corrupted society. This mental and physical journey can be seen at work in the case of Evelyn in Carter's *The Passion of New Eve*.

Todorov suggests that the physical world and the spiritual world overlap. The description of space and time of the supernatural world do not have any probable correlation with the actual world. These elements seem to be hanging on a straight line far beyond the imaginable.

Todorov discusses the notion of proximity of the fantastic with Jean Piaget's stages of mental development in his work *The Fantastic*. Todorov cites Jean Piaget:

> "Early in mental development, there exists no precise differentiation between the self and the external world" (Todorov: 119).

Alongside with this theory, the concept of metamorphosis is intimately correlated with a process of development. Through this process of mutation, the characters are forced to change their conduct and behaviour. Carter used this transformation from the beginning of her novel *The Passion of New Eve* in order to show a long lasting evolution of the main character. Evelyn goes to the United States of America, witnesses a civil war and gets in touch with a black woman whom he abuses without any regrets.

Winterson also presents her male protagonist as a drifter, who needs to explore many diverse spaces in order to further expand his volatile sexuality. This experience suggests possible solutions to many of his worries. So he decides to travel with Tradescant to put things in order. From the moment of his departure, he gets in touch with numerous groups of people like the Hopi, with whom he learns a different notion about the flux of time.

Marina Warner argues that "it is characteristic of metamorphosis writing to appear in transitional places and at the confluence of the traditions and civilizations" (Warner: 2002, 19). For instance, Evelyn has to face all kinds of adventures and trials to prove himself in order to acquire women's respect. Warner states that:

> . . . some kinds of metamorphosis play a crucial part in anagnorisis, or recognition, the reversal fundamental to narrative form, and so govern narrative satisfaction. . . (Warner: 2002, 19).

Based on the last assumption presented, the reader realises at the very end of Carter's novel that Lilith tests Eve one last time and asks her if she wants to get her former genitals back, but she refuses them and laughs, because she finally acquired her true self and does not need them anymore. Sex and gender are finally in conformity. Eve's journey towards knowledge is finally over.

Jordan shares the same feeling at the end of *Sexing the Cherry*. He encounters his mental maturity and feels confident when he is placed in charge of the expeditions to the New World, because he has already acquired psychological stability during his quest for meaning:

> . . . He came to, and feeling his way, arms outstretched he has suddenly touched another face and screamed out. For a second the fog cleared and he saw the stranger was himself.
>
> 'Perhaps I am to die,' he said, and then, while I was protesting this, 'Or perhaps I am to live, to be complete as she said I would be.'
>
> 'Who is she?'
>
> 'Fortunata' (Winterson: 2001, 143).

The Dog Woman also changed her mind concerning the world around her. She feels safer and interacts easily with her friends and most of all, she reflects about the events and perceives that she finally is doing the right thing:

> . . . I had been drinking with my friends the bakers all night, or, rather, they had been drinking and it was fortunate for them that I was able to pull their bodies to a safe place. I did not start the fire – but I did not stop it. Indeed the act of pouring a vat of oil on the flames may well have been said to encourage it. But it was a sign, a sign that our great sin would finally be burned away. I could not have hindered the work of God (Winterson: 2001, 143).

To sum up, the quest for the self embodies one's growth through a hazardous voyage of knowledge. During this journey, it is critical to gain knowledge of one's mistakes and strengthen one's desire for the encounter with one's true self, the ultimate challenge of our existence. The quest for the self' is a quest for self-sufficiency; one must leave the past and the

social structures that were formerly imposed to us, until we finally find our true self which is inimitable and unique.

A. *The Passion of New Eve*

At the beginning of Carter's *The Passion of New Eve*, Evelyn, an Englishman, who was offered a teaching job in New York, realises that there is something strange going on in the city, with riots and protests taking place everywhere. Carter uses her black humour[5] concerning women's actions towards the established rules and customs. Evelyn sees a group of prostitutes battling against the police and he finds it awkward:

> There were rumours of a kamikaze squad of syphilitic whores who donated spirochetal enlightenment for free to their customers out of dedication to the cause. They blew up wedding shops and scoured the newspapers for marriage announcements so that they could send brides gifts of well-honed razors. I grew as nervous of the menacing gleam of their leather jackets as I was of the crazed muggers who haunted the garbage; the Women practiced humiliation at random and bruised machismo takes longer to heal than a broken head (Carter: 1996, 17).

He starts to explore the streets and the bars and gets in touch with a beautiful prostitute named Leilah, whom he finds to be the perfect woman for him. Evelyn feels sexually aroused by her good looks. Soon he starts to get involved with her. From this moment on, Evelyn shows his self-centred nature, neglecting Leilah, a person worthy of respect. Later, Leilah discovers that she is pregnant but Evelyn asks her to have an abortion. After abandoning her, he becomes conscious of his vanity:

[5] This concept illustrates ordinary characters or circumstances that are frequently overstated far beyond the limits of normal satire or irony.

> She was a perfect woman; like the moon, she only gave reflected light. She had mimicked me, she had become the thing I wanted of her, so that she could make me love her and yet she had mimicked me so well she had also mimicked the fatal flaw in me that meant I was not able to love her because I myself was so unlovable (Carter: 1996, 34).

Evelyn flees to the desert and is lost without guidance and means of survival. He is found by a group of women, whose intention is to capture him. Evelyn is brought to Beulah, where he meets Leilah's mother, the leader of the Amazonian women.

Lindsey Tucker states that Beulah:

> . . . is planned on the prototype of feminist separatist communities which are the underlying structures of some already mentioned novels. *Mizora* (Lane), *Herland* (Perkins Gilman), *The Female Man* (Russ) or *Woman on the Edge of Time* (Piercy) all exploit the same paradigm, each focusing on different problematic issues (Tucker: 183).

In *The Passion of New Eve* the narrator, who is the central character of the novel, describes his/her gender metamorphosis and mutated self. Highly concerned with Beauvoir's statement "one is not born a woman, one becomes one" (Beauvoir: 301), Carter re-imagines Mother as a grotesque symbol. Mother's interference may be interpreted as a necessary intervention so that Evelyn may redeem himself and learn from his perceived mistakes during his masculine life.

Evelyn's transformation into womanhood shows the way for an examination of the methods that create the human body, that it becomes

exposed as an absolute Lacanian mélange of bits and pieces[6]. After the surgery it becomes clear that Evelyn's change is not immediate as in the case of Woolf's character Orlando.

According to Sarah Gamble, Eve finally starts to understand the repercussions of her past acts, but does not want to stay in Beulah anymore. "Although she escapes both Beulah and her fate as virgin mother" (Gamble: 125), she cannot go back in time and pretend that nothing has happened. "Carter uses Evelyn as a narrative device to question the very categories of gender she transgresses" (Gamble: 125). Eve runs away to the desert once again and is kidnapped by misogynist poet Zero and his harem. From this moment on, she gets in touch with a horrible tyrant, who treats women in a degrading manner placing them in the same level of wild animals, whose only role is to have intercourse. Zero believes women are despicable and should be deprived of language, dignity and self-sufficiency. Eve is destined to sterility and slavery, rather than to the fertile prospect guaranteed to her by Mother.

Later, it is Zero who finally brings Eve to Tristessa. He is obsessed with the most insane conviction that Tristessa has turned him infertile and punishes her for troubling him. The tyrant forces her to rape Eve. Unconsciously, the evil god introduces the new couple to their redemption as the new Adam and New Eve.

It is only at the end of the story that Eve understands that she has been searching the way back to the maternal womb, which represents an opportunity of rebirth, of renascence. At this point, Eve has lost Tristessa forever, because she/he was previously shot during their escape from Zero's dominion.

[6] This feature is also explored in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein.*

Later on, Eve travels to the coast where she finds Lilith, who asks her to go into a cave. Inside, Eve starts a new journey to find Mother, but she is mistaken, for her rite of passage through the cave is in fact a journey away from Mother and the comforts of myths. Eve realises that she is not there and that Mother is no more than "a figure of speech" (Carter: 1996: 184). She is finally wholly reborn:

> I emitted, at last, a single, frail, inconsolable cry like that of a new born child. But there was no answering sound at all in that vast, sonorous place where I found myself but the resonance of the sea and the small echo of my voice. I called for my mother but she did not answer me.
>
> "Mama–mama–mama!"
>
> She never answered (Carter: 1996, 186).

In conclusion, Eve could recover his maleness but she refuses it, believing there is no way back into being a man. Tiresias, conversely, chooses to regain his original male body. He travels to many places in Greece and he is tested by the Gods to regain his integrity as a human being and get back his male condition.

Carter used some aspects based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Evelyn is punished by Mother just like Tiresias was by Athena and Hera, for not respecting nature. The main aspect that remains different in both stories is that Tiresias learns not to overestimate the Gods' power and as a reward, he regains his masculine body. In the case of Eve, she does not accept being turned back into a man. She goes back to the womb (the profound cave) to purge herself from doubts, dilemmas and to embrace her femininity once and for all. The security of mother's womb is essential

to the healthy development of the child that will be brought to the world. This period in the cave gives her the sense of comfort and stability to regain enough strength to face the world's new social order. This was the redeeming end for a character that began as a selfish and cruel man who was made into a woman to find his "true" self and to understand that no gender condition is easy to bear. Evelyn starts searching for the perfect woman that ironically he will become.

B. *Sexing the Cherry*

As previously mentioned, this work by Winterson, alongside with *The Passion,* are examples of historiographic metafiction, which destabilise strict categories of gender and sexuality.

Sexing the Cherry includes two narrators that alternate: one female and one male – the Dog Woman, and Jordan, who grows up to spend his life travelling with Tradescant on perilous journeys.

Each narrative is represented by the existence of a symbol, in this case a fruit: a pineapple for Jordan and a banana for the phallic Dog Woman; each one tells the story of their search for meaning and love.

Winterson's character Jordan also goes through many dilemmas and gets to know that the female condition is somehow not as easy as he expected and that even the twelve dancing princesses in their respective fairy tales had to face many horrors and had to do several tasks to be free and happy with their loved ones. Further in his quest, Jordan starts his own redemption together with Tradescant. He starts to question his self and wonder about what path he should follow without regrets. In his mind, the character thinks that he had run away from himself. He is set to regain hope, honour and love.

Jordan's quest narrative is set from the moment of his departure. The boy gets in touch with different people and one way or another learns something new for his own life experience. He begins to understand that life is a continuous process and that he must keep his soul free from any prejudice and egocentrism.

"The journey is not linear" (Winterson: 2001, 80) and it is followed by the decay of the body such as wrinkles and the modification of its lines. Our mind is always making up new ideas and concepts about

love, hate and friendship. The self is always evolving and mutating through time. It is not contained in a place or a moment in life and therefore it is controlled by one's need for growth.

During one of his voyages, Jordan dreams about Fortunata, the last dancing princess, the one who ran away. He gets to know about her life and especially something about himself:

> I stayed with Fortunata for one month, learning more about her ways and something about my own (Winterson: 2001, 99).

Fortunata is a source of knowledge and life experience, whereas Jordan is still searching for meaning in his life. She does not need to be rescued; she has everything she needs on the island, but still Jordan is not pleased enough with his recent discoveries and consequently travels once again to explore the world.

Tradescant is a role model for the wanderer boy, and like him, he wants to have a normal life like everybody else; he wants "to be a hero" (Winterson: 2001, 101) and be honoured by his country; he aims to have a "wife and children" (Winterson: 2001, ibidem) at every port to wait for his return.

Jordan wants to be "self sufficient and without self-doubt" (Winterson: 2001, 101) like his mother, who does not care about "how she looks, only for what she does" (Winterson: 2001, ibidem).

He doesn't know where he belongs; Jordan does not know if his mother cares for him and therefore thinks that she takes his choice of departing for granted; he wants to be asked to stay by someone:

> We never discussed whether or not I would go; she took it for granted, almost as though she has expected it. I wanted her to ask me to stay, just as now I want Fortunata to ask me to stay (Winterson: 2001, 101).

Jordan thinks his destiny is gloomy and far from being defined. He reflects about Tradescant's life, his achievements. His adoptive father was a hero and so he was also destined to be one, too:

> For Tradescant being a hero comes naturally. His father was a hero before him. The journeys he makes can be tracked on any map and he knows what he's looking for. He wants to bring back rarities and he does (Winterson: 2001, ibidem).

Jordan was abandoned as child in the river Thames and was found by the Dog Woman on a river bank. His story resembles the story of Moses, the Israelite prophet, who was also found adrift by a pharaoh's daughter on the river Nile.

According to the *Exodus* book of the Holy Bible, Moses was adopted by the Egyptian royal family and therefore treated as an equal. Soon he starts to understand that he does not belong to that family and starts to question himself about his true identity. He sees how the Israelite people are treated, kills an Egyptian slave-master and runs away across the Red Sea to Midian (Exodus 2: 1-15).

In his mind, Moses was lost without guidance. He does not know where he belongs. He must try to find his true identity and be joined with his family.

Some years passed and he still thinks about his people being enslaved by the pharaoh. He is ordered by the Christian god to go back to Egypt to free his people and guide them through the desert to the holy land (Exodus 4: 1-31).

Jordan, in turn, does not have the need to save anyone, except for himself. At the end of the novel, the wanderer takes over the expeditions to the New World after Tradescant's death. He learned many things with him and is capable enough to lead ships back and forth to the New World:

> When Tradescant died, Jordan took over the expeditions and charted the courses and decided what was precious and what was not. He's been at sea for thirteen years, though I've had gifts from him and I've always known that he would come back . . . (Winterson: 2001, 105).

Jordan's main goal, alongside the definition of his sexuality, is to become a hero like Tradescant, his substitute. His journey is not easy, but nothing is acquired without one's endeavour to find a reasonable meaning in life.

Chapter III. – Ambiguous Gender

The Passion of New Eve and *Sexing the Cherry* were strongly influenced by Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* (1928). Woolf's novel is about a boy named Orlando born in England during Elizabeth I's reign, who does not want to grow old and decrepit. He is briefly a lover of the queen. After the queen's death, King James I appoints him ambassador to Constantinople. There he falls asleep and when he wakes up, he realises he has been turned into a woman, yet with the same personality and mind as before. Henceforth, she becomes Lady Orlando and goes on a trip with a gypsy clan, adopting their way of life and concluding that it is not bad to be a woman. Her wish to live without growing old comes true and she lives through the seventeenth to the twentieth century.

Carter and Winterson wrote their own paratexts to explore the nature of Orlando's double sexual condition; this made possible the creation of their own ambiguous characters, their debt to Woolf. These works assumedly try to demystify bisexuality, something that is hardly accepted by most sceptics and religious hordes.

Carter wrote a libretto entitled *Orlando or, the Enigma of Sexes* that remained unfinished at the time of Carter's death in 1992 (Silver: 223). This work reflects about the sexual origin of the human condition. According to Aristophanes, human beings were perfect while there was no gender distinction. Every mortal had a double nature of both female and male in harmony:

> From then, in the beginning,
>
> there were not two sexes, as they are now,
>
> but one only – not men nor women

> but one perfected nature, male and female in one being,
> contrarieties in harmony
> the resolution of contradictions (Carter: 1997, 115-156).

Nevertheless, this perfection was seen as pure self-centredness by the gods. Zeus decided to split one's sexuality in half and leave him/her incomplete until the end of his/her days. Furthermore, one must find the other half of his/her self in order to accomplish happiness:

> So Zeus, to punish them,
> split them all in half,
> straight down the middle,
> as you slice an apple,
> and left us mutilated,
> to punish us,
> each sex as incomplete
> as shadow without substance.
> After this cruel division,
> bereft, the crippled halves
> each one desires the other
> . . . longing,
> to grow into one again (Carter: 1997, 156).

It is implied that "this cruel division" (Carter: 1997, 156) is the reason behind so many problems concerning sexual ambiguity. One desires to reunite his/her original nature in order to acquire full happiness.

In Winterson's essay "Gift of Wings", the writer explains the need for gender stability and analyses Orlando's physical and psychological traits. This elucidation helps the reader to understand that there are other options concerning one's sexual desire. Like Carter, Winterson observes the perilous quest to acquire one's double sexuality. She explores the need for sexual stability and the reason why Orlando's transformation did not change the character's way to love both man and woman. Orlando has the knowledge of both genders and it makes him strong; his transformation is only physical, because his mind has not changed; it is not more than a costume change. Orlando does really change his/her skin, his external appearance:

> . . . Orlando is brave, funny, vulnerable and proud, and has the unusual advantage in fiction, and one previously enjoyed in drama and opera by means of costume change only. Orlando changes her skin. (Winterson: 1996, 67).

Orlando's metamorphosis includes gender and sexuality. The character knows how to be loved; therefore, Orlando knows "in her own body the power of the lover". The self has not mutated in the sense that "the Orlando who holds Sasha in his arms is still the Orlando who holds Shelmerdine in hers" (Winterson: 1996, 67).

These changes are intentional; they mock "the reader's hidden doubts and delights in a language that offers the outrageous as perfectly natural if a little surprising" (Winterson: 1996, 67):

> As all Orlando's loves had been women, now, through the culpable laggardry of the human frame to adapt itself to convention, though she herself was a woman, it was still a woman she loved; and if the consciousness of being of the same sex had any effect at all, it was to quicken and deepen those feelings which she had as a man. For now a thousand hints and mysteries became plain to her that were then dark. Now, the obscurity, which divides the sexes and let's linger innumerable impurities in its gloom, was removed . . . this affection gained in beauty what is lost in falsity (Woolf: 1993: 115).

As a consequence, Orlando can be seen as a bisexual character, which does not care if her feelings are not understood by those who surround her. Therefore, as previously mentioned, Orlando can potentially be seen as a device of Woolf's desire to share her feelings towards Vita Sackville-West. According to Winterson, *Orlando*'s first edition included a reasonable number of photographs of Vita "in various costumes, male and female, proclaiming her as Orlando" (Winterson: 1996, 68).

As a result of what has been argued, both Carter's *Libretto* and Winterson's "Gift of Wings" try to present Woolf's point of view in relation to Orlando's gender change; it is also significant that both writers may have drawn on this ambiguity in their respective novels *The Passion of New Eve* and *Sexing the Cherry*.

Orlando and *The Passion of New Eve* are intertextually bound with the myth of Tiresias of Thebes, as described in Ovid's poem *Metamorphoses*. This myth tells the story of the son of the shepherd Everes and the nymph Chariclo.

In this poem the author explores amongst other topics, the story of a priest of Apollo named Tiresias, who undertakes both physical and psychological metamorphoses.

According to the myth told by the character Hyginus in *Metamorphoses*, Tiresias was a prophet of Apollo, who was blinded by Athena, when he saw her bathing naked. Athena punished him. His mother Chariclo begged the Goddess to break her curse, but she could not. Athena was merciful; she cleaned his ears and gave him the gift to understand bird songs, thus the gift of foresight:

> The Story of This sad event gave blind Tiresias fame,
> Pentheus Through Greece establish'd in a prophet's name.
> Th' unhallow'd Pentheus only durst deride
> The cheated people, and their eyeless guide.
> To whom the prophet in his fury said,
> Shaking the hoary honours of his head:
> "'Twere well, presumptuous man, 'twere well for thee
> If thou wert eyeless too, and blind, like me:
> For the time comes, nay, 'tis already here. . . (Ovid: 106).

On Mount Cyllene, Greece, Tiresias attacked a copulating pair of snakes with a blow from his stick. Hera was so angry that she punished the prophet by turning him into a woman:

> It happen'd once, within a shady wood,
> Two twisted snakes he in conjunction view'd,
> When with his staff their slimy folds he broke,

> And lost his manhood at the fatal stroke (Ovid: 102).

Hera interferes without being provoked. It was a vindictive impulse that made her act so harshly. Gods are supposed to be passive concerning the life events of mortals, but the goddess broke the oath taken by the gods and intervenes to punish the oppressor. Warner clarifies that:

> . . . many of the most terrible metamorphoses are inflicted by the gods in cruel revenge, frequently unprovoked. . . (Warner, 2002, 9).

She further explains that this kind of transformation is reversible:

> . . . the gods, unlike humans, are not condemned to remain in their altered form, but are endowed with irrepressible powers of metamorphosis, constitutive of their divinity, their deathlessness (Warner, 2002, 11).

Later on, Tiresias became a priestess of Zeus' wife, married and had children. According to some versions of the tale, Lady Tiresias was a prostitute of great reputation.

After seven years as a woman, Tiresias again found mating snakes and she blown them from his stick. As a result of his action, Tiresias was free from his sentence and allowed to regain his maleness:

> But, after seven revolving years, he view'd
> The self-same serpents in the self-same wood:

"And if," says he, "such virtue in you lye,
That he who dares your slimy folds untie
Must change his kind, a second stroke I'll try."
Again he struck the snakes, and stood again
New-sex'd, and strait recover'd into man (Ovid: 105).

Tiresias' background, fully male and then fully female, was important, both for his prophecy and his experiences. Zeus and Hera wanted to know from his/her experience whose sexual condition had more pleasure during intercourse. Tiresias tried to conciliate the two gods:

The sense of pleasure in the male is far
More dull and dead, than what you females share."
Juno the truth of what was said deny'd;
Tiresias therefore must the cause decide,
For he the pleasure of each sex had try'd (Ovid: 102).

Moreover, prophecy was a gift given only to the priests and priestesses. Therefore, Tiresias offered Zeus and Hera evidence of his integrity and gained the gift of male and female priestly prophecy (Ovid: 104-108).

In conclusion, gender ambiguity can be considered as a rite of passage in which the characters live many different experiences that help to determine their divided selves. This uncertainty is the motif which makes the quest so interesting. The quest for the lost double sexuality is perilous and deceiving, but it is not impossible to get hold of. We must

keep trying to surpass every obstacle that is presented throughout our journey.

A. Eve(lyn) and Tristessa

As suggested earlier, Carter was inspired by Woolf's concept of Orlando's feminine transgender state in relation to Evelyn in her novel *The Passion of New Eve*.

The narrative is being told by Evelyn himself and it suggests his indifference and lack of empathy towards women. The protagonist is most obviously defective in describing the quality of his feelings in relation to other people around him. He acts as if he is in control, as a doctor conducting a medical examination. It is shown that he has no idea of how humiliating such an examination is for women. According to Linden Peach, Evelyn is an "arch-misogynist" character (Peach: 118). As a result, he represents "a vicious parody of the male, objectifying gaze" (Peach: ibidem).

Evelyn starts a new life away from his homeland and is unconsciously driven by his obsession to find the woman of his dreams, Tristessa, a famous and stunning Hollywood actress. This idea is by all accounts the main goal of the protagonist at the beginning of the narrative, but it turned out to be just a doorway to find his own contentment and to find his feminine self somewhere lost in the wilderness of the world.

Carter's revision of the fate of Woolf's Orlando is slightly different. Evelyn's transformation is a punishment for his cowardly behaviour towards Leilah. He uses her only for pleasure. He runs away to the desert, where he is abducted into Mother's Secret Compound. There, he is forced to be turned into a woman. He is not psychologically ready for that transformation, but his process of apprenticeship requires it. When

the surgery is completed, he has become a perfect woman (Carter: 1996, 46-72).

Evelyn's transformation into Eve is primarily a surgical one and Eve feels at first lost and without guidance through a strange rite of passage. She reflects:

> I know nothing. I am a tabula erasa, a blank sheet of paper, an unhatched egg. I have not yet become a woman, although I possess a woman's shape. Not a woman, no; both more and less than a real woman. Now I am a being as monstrous as Mother herself; but I cannot bring myself to think of that. Eve remains wilfully in the state of innocence that precedes the fall (Carter: 1996, 83).

Mother is Leilah's mother; the young girl also had to go through a psychological transformation, to become strong enough to punish Evelyn now named Eve; Leilah is now named Lilith.

Mother is a retired plastic surgeon and geneticist. Prior to the intervention, Mother rapes Evelyn and explains to him her plan to deliberately transform him into a woman.

Alison Lee analyses the connection of Sigmund Freud's Oedipus complex with *The Passion of New Eve* and states that ". . . unlike Oedipus, however, Evelyn undergoes a castration that will turn out to be more than a symbolic blindness" (Lee: 78).

Carter acts like Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's character Victor Frankenstein, who creates a creature without the assistance of a mother. Carter reconstructs this setting by using the pagan Mother Goddess as a device of creating a woman without male help. Sophia, one of the

Amazonian women in Beulah, Mother's realm, enlightens the terrified Evelyn about the procedure:

> Myth is more instructive than history, Evelyn; Mother proposes to reactivate the parthenogenesis archetype, utilising a new formula. She's going to castrate you, Evelyn, and then excavate what we call the "fructifying female space" inside you and make you a perfect specimen of womanhood (Carter: 1996, 68).

As a result, Eve's child will be a virgin birth; New Eve will represent the Virgin Mary who, according to Mother's intentions, will be inseminated with his own sperm so that he might escape the source of his corruption and bring forth the *Messiah of the Antithesis* (my italics). Addressing the genesis of this phenomenon Marina Warner states that "the idea of virgin birth appears, for it binds deity to creature in a unique and indissoluble way" and that "there is no more matriarchal image than the Christian mother of God who bore a child without male assistance" (Warner: 2000, 46).

The Virgin Mary is invoked by the Christian liturgy as "the holy root of salvation" and it is also stated that "through her the Incarnation was possible" (Warner: 2000: 46). It is extremely contradictory "that this parthenogenetic goddess fitted into the Aristotelian biological scheme," (Warner: 2000, 46) giving evidence of misogynist and contemptuous image of women's role in reproduction.

In the pagan tradition, parthenogenesis is symbolically associated with virginity, because in the case of pagan goddesses, the

image of the virgin is hardly ever associated with "chastity as a virtue" (Warner: 2000, 47). Mother represents Carter's fulfilment of this aspect.

New Eve, like Shelley's creature, was born full-grown and she had to undergo a hard process of emotional and mental acceptance; his reconditioning is reminiscent of the one gone through by the inhabitants of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, in order to become a woman. In a sense, thus, New Eve's child would be his/her replica.

According to Evslin, Athena was also born fully grown; the goddess of wisdom and war is the daughter of the titan goddess Metis and Zeus. The father of gods was afraid that Metis would give birth to children greater than him, so he swallowed her to prevent such event from occurring, but it was too late, Metis was already with child. Zeus started to have strong headaches and asked Hephaestus to split his head open, consequently Athena burst from his forehead fully grown and already armed by her mother. As a response to Zeus' unfaithful relationship with Metis, Hera, the goddess of marriage, women and birth produces the ugly god Hephaestus parthenogenetically.

In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir refers to the process of parthenogenesis, in words that can be applied to Carter's novel:

> In cases of parthenogenesis the egg of the virgin female develops into an embryo without fertilization by the male, which thus may play no role at all. . . . More and more numerous and daring experiments in parthenogenesis are being performed, and in many species the male appears to be fundamentally unnecessary (Beauvoir: 36).

Once again, Evelyn sarcastically speaks with Sophia, one of Mother's Amazonian women, and the latter assures him that this change is definitive:

> "Is it such a bad thing to become like me?"
>
> But I was filled with consternation, stranded as I was in the middle of a nightmare in which I ate, slept, woke, had conversations and was about to suffer an operation which would transform me completely. A complete woman, yes, Sophia assured me; tits, clit, ovaries, labia major, labia minor. . . But, Sophia, does a change in the coloration of the rind alter the taste of a fruit? A change in the appearance will restructure the essence, Sophia assured me coolly. Psycho-surgery, Mother calls it (Carter: 1996, 68).

Mother finishes the surgery, but before Eve can be impregnated with his sperm, she runs away and gets lost in the desert. There she is abducted by Zero, who is considered as a divine being, like a malicious Hades, having forced his own cult on his seven reverential women. He regularly rapes Eve, initiating her into her new womanhood:

> He was the first man I met when I became a woman.
>
> He raped me unceremoniously in the sand in front of his ranch-house after he dragged me from the helicopter, while his seven wives stood round in a circle, giggling and applauding. I was in no away prepared for the pain: his body was an anonymous instrument of torture, mine my own rack. My nostrils were filled with the rank stench of his sweat and his come and, dominating even those odours, the sweetish, appalling smell of

> pig-shit, a smell which clung to the entire ranch and its environs in a foul miasma (Carter: 1996, 86).

By being adored like a god, Zero feels extremely choleric in relation to women and treats them with contemptuous violence. Therefore he directs his contempt at Tristessa as a *femme fatale* (my italics), who unaware of it defies his virility. His main obsession to find Tristessa is based on the ridiculous assumption that she is responsible for his infertility. In order to regain his full masculinity, he must find Tristessa and kill her.

Tristessa has been pretending to be a woman all her life but at the same time she tries to preserve this illusion. Evelyn is haunted in his fantasies by Tristessa:

> Tristessa. Enigma. Illusion. Woman? Ah!
>
> And all you signified was false! Your existence was only notional; you were a piece of pure mystification (Carter: 1996, 6).

The representation of Tristessa's character is more complex than it might appear at first. Evelyn fails to distinguish between transvestism and female disguise. According to Peach, this masquerade subverts all notions of a natural femininity. As a result, Tristessa is both an affirmation and a rejection of femininity for in her subterfuge as woman she implies that femaleness was a cover-up that could be removed (Peach: 115).

This character represents a transvestite, drag queen and an icon of cinematic sexuality. She is an icon of herself, an image whose elements have been constructed and then joined to create a fake personality.

Gamble states that Tristessa's fake surname is a recreation of Marquis de Sade's Madame de Saint-Ange (a female libertine), who appears in Sade's *Philosophy in the Boudoir* (Gamble: 126).

Zero finally finds Tristessa. He discovers her glass palace, invades it and he makes fun of her. His harem starts to tease her, touching her body and realising that she is a man:

> Emmeline stretched out her hand to touch the organs that had been the best-kept secret in the whole world while Tiny derisively applied her lips to the open wound that was Tristessa's mouth. Some of the other girls chose their favourite method of desecration, pulled down their dungarees and pissed copiously on the floor, while others tore off every stitch of clothing and danced obscene naked dances in front of him, contemptuously flourishing their fringed holes at him and brandishing mocking buttocks . . . I could not think of him as man; my confusion was perfect – as perfect as the exemplary confusion of the proud, solitary heroine who now underwent the unimaginable ordeal of a confrontation with the essential aspect of its being it had so grandly abandoned, the implicit maleness it had never been able to assimilate into itself (Carter: 1996, 128).

Zero beats Tristessa up during his wedding with Eve. The evil pagan god wanted to enjoy the moment in order to have his revenge:

> . . . the ritual took possession of them all as the restoration of beauty took possession of Tristessa and Betty Boop's fingers insensibly gentle as, in the mirror, Tristessa saw the grudging hands of his tormentor were building up again the spectacular fiction in his beauty (Carter: 1996, 133).

This sarcastic wedding ceremony preceded by a mutual rape narrated by Eve reveals the potential challenge embodied by these equally improbable beings:

> So he made us man and wife although it was a double wedding – both were the bride, both the groom in this ceremony (Carter: 1996, 135).

Gamble further suggests that:

> the union of the woman who was once a man and the man who has made himself into the perfect woman has profound implications, for in this action not only gendered language but gender itself has been cut adrift from the body, completely reducing sexual identity to a matter of performance" (Gamble: 125).

Together they are reborn to have a second chance:

> I was dragged back to the bed, protesting, and Marijane and Sadie prepared me for the sacrifice. They grasped my arms firmly while Betty Boop and Emmeline took hold each of my ankles and spread my legs wide. . . . Now all bayed for Tristessa to mount me. . . Tristessa stared down in amazement at the erection Betty Louella had procured for him. . . Zero

> gave him a great kick in the arse so that, taken by surprise, he lost balance and toppled on top of me so unexpectedly he shook all the breath out of me (Carter: 1996, 136-137).

Tristessa was forced to rape Eve. Gender and sex are not in conformity. As Judith Butler argues, gender is performative:

> As a public action and performative act, gender is not a radical choice or project that reflects a merely individual choice, but neither is it imposed or inscribed upon the individual, as some post-structuralist displacements of the subject would contend. The body is not passively scripted with cultural codes, as if it were a lifeless recipient of wholly pre-pen cultural relations. But neither do embodied selves pre-exist the cultural conventions which essentially signify bodies. Actors are always already on the stage, within the terms of the performance. Just as a script may be enacted in various ways, and just as the play requires both text and interpretation, so the gendered body acts its part in a culturally restricted corporeal space and enacts interpretations within the confines of already existing directives (Butler: 1988, 526).

If gender is represented by the act itself, then there is no alternative to a compulsory intercourse which gender performances presumably try to suggest.

Leilah also had to overcome her tragic pregnancy and to become strong enough to avenge herself on Evelyn. So she was reborn as Lilith (direct reference to the homonymous biblical figure), and undergo a transformation – a psychological metamorphosis into a guerrilla leader.

According to Northrop Frye, Lilith was Adam's first wife, but she was a confrontational person and she was expelled from the Garden of Eden. "Since she was made of the earth, like Adam, she became proud and refused to lie beneath him during intercourse" (Frye: 140). This violated the command to be fertile and reproductive, since she was not being impregnated:

> So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea. . . (Genesis: 27-28)

In a nutshell, Evelyn is turned into a woman becoming the new Eve; she regains a life and a new role within the world around her. She has to learn how to live as a woman and to face rape and male dominance; the spell has backfired for Eve(lyn). She has to face *Zero*'s sexual appetite and to be forced to have intercourse with him.

B. Jordan and Dog Woman

Jordan's quest for the self begins when he questions his own sexual orientation and therefore starts to search for clues that can help him to settle his own life. He visits a brothel and gets in touch with the local prostitutes and tries on their dresses on and puts on some make-up to know what it is like to be a woman in a degraded environment:

> I did as they advised and came to them in a simple costume hired for the day. They praised my outfit and made me blush by stroking my cheek and commenting on its smoothness (Winterson: 2001, 30).

Jordan feels pleased because of his cross dressing and make-up are praised by the prostitutes, but then realises that no condition is easy or acceptable. Cross dressing also appears in one Winterson's earlier novels, *The Passion*. In this context, Judith Butler argues, gender is not a natural fact but a cultural performance and its apparent "naturalness is constituted through discursively constrained performative acts that produce the body through and within the categories of sex" (Salih: 2004, 31).

Jordan is charmed by their stories, because he wants to feel their pain and understand their expectations. At the same time, Jordan realises that no path of life is certain to work out and that is why he sets out with Tradescant to find his life's main goal (Winterson: 80).

Sonya Andermahr explains that these stories are constructed in order "to defamiliarize the taken-for-granted ideology of fairy tales", to break down the chains of the "frequently oppressive messages to young women to obey patriarchal dictates . . . and to reveal gender as a cultural construction of the human character" (Andermahr: 69).

Tradescant's life experience of travelling over the world gives hope and inspiration to Jordan's expectations. He feels confident while he is together with his companion. He wishes to be stronger, better and someone else in time. These ideas are meticulously kept inside a log book. This object is not meant to record "the truth as you will find it in diaries and maps and log-books" but rather the things "I might have made, or perhaps did make in some other place in time" (Winterson: 2001, 10).

The protagonist mentions that the story of the twelve princesses has not been written, because Fortunata, the youngest sister, had run away on her wedding day. This dancing princess alone escapes the patriarchal rule of the fairy tale. She transgresses in order to conquer happiness.

Jordan sees his great opportunity to write his own *fairy tale* (my italics) in this transgression, substituting Fortunata's story. The protagonist's book deals with his secret life written "with invisible ink" (Winterson: 2001, 10)[7].

Winterson uses this remark to suggest the beginning of Jordan's process of individualisation, in order to provide him with a wide psychological growth. According to Onega, the character's attitude is an "example of *écriture feminine*, the type of writing written with *languelait*, the 'white ink' of 'mother's milk' that Hélène Cixous proposes as an alternative to the 'phallogocentric' writing of patriarchy, carried out, as she contends, with pen/penis" (Onega: 87).

At the end of the story it becomes clear that Jordan's process of searching for the self engages his perception "of the constructedness of

[7] In Winterson's *The Passion*, the main character Henri also uses a book as therapy while his is in the madhouse.

binary oppositions like father/mother; man/woman; culture/nature; head/heart and the eventual revelation of his bisexuality" (Onega: 87).

Jordan's search for a meaningful reason in life is achieved when he metaphorically changes from being heterosexual to bisexual. This process of change is obtained while writing his log book with the invisible ink that Cixous prescribes for *écriture feminine*, a type of writing which attempts to deconstruct the previously mentioned binary oppositions. By doing this, Jordan becomes more aware of his place within the world.

As mentioned before, the Dog Woman, another ambiguous character, seen as a grotesque example of a hybridized identity, represents an excessive femaleness, which is the source of her power to disturb and impose her will on others.

Winterson's obscene and humorous discourse in *Sexing the Cherry*, in Bakhtinian fashion, often describes the low parts of the body. The Dog Woman's response to seeing the first banana brought back from the New World is typically subversive and it suggests the idea of rotting:

> . . . 'It's either painted or infected,' said I, 'for there's none such a colour that I know.' . . . There was no good woman could put that to her mouth, and for a man it was the practice of cannibals (Winterson: 2001, 12-13).

According to Andermahr, the female protagonist is:

> . . . putatively heterosexual, she resists normative categorization. According to the view put forward by the French radical feminist Monique Wittig, she is more properly designated as lesbian: 'Lesbian is the only concept I know which is beyond the categories of sex (woman and man),

> because the designated subject (lesbian) is not a woman, either economically, or politically, or ideologically'. (The Dog Woman's modern day radical feminist counterpart would appear to lend weight to this theory) (Andermahr: 72).

Her monstrosity is placed in the lower half of her body and is associated with her sexual power over men. In one of many amusing episodes, she lifts her skirts over her head to prove that she is not wearing any extra weights, while she competes with an elephant in a fair attraction. The crowd fainted seeing that she was not wearing any underwear "in respect of the heat" (Winterson: 2001, 25).

The only time that she finds a man interested and brave enough to have sex with her, she literally swallows him with her vagina:

> . . . pull[ing] him in, balls and everything. He was stuck (Winterson: 2001, 106).

According to Onega, this hilarious scene presents the Dog Woman as the personification of "Freud's *vagina dentata,* Joseph Campbell's 'phallic mother', the castrating mother of primitive male fears" (Onega: 82).

Her strong personality is associated with her childhood upbringing. She was the daughter of a very skinny and light woman, who died prematurely. Once, while she was still very little, her father swung her up onto his knees to tell her a story and she broke both of his legs. After this event, he never touched her again, excepting when he used the

dogs' whip to punish her. Her father treated her like an abnormal being and that is why she killed him:

> One night my father tried to steal me and sell me to a man with one leg. They had a barrel ready to put me in, but no sooner had they slammed on the lid than I burst the bonds of the barrel and I came flying out at my father's throat.
>
> This was my first murder (Winterson: 2001, 107).

The Dog woman started to mistrust people, for the reason that everyone was afraid of her. She killed more than two thousand puritans, because they were always making fun of her, and mostly because they associated her with the devil himself.

In a nutshell, according to Sarah Salih's essay "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" (2004) on Butler's theory, the Dog Woman and Jordan's sexual identities might be perceived in terms of gender as performance. According to Andermahr, "the Dog woman represents a violent transgression of normative gender roles" and Jordan embodies "a more subtle and thoughtful challenge to sexual difference" (73). Jordan feels relieved from repressive dualities in cross-dressing:

> I have met a number of people who, anxious to be free of the burdens of gender, have dressed themselves as women and women as men.
>
> After my experience in the pen of prostitutes I decided to continue as a woman for a time and took a job on a fish stall.
>
> I noticed that women have a private language. A language nor dependent on the constructions of men but structured by signs and expressions, and

> uses ordinary words as code-words meaning something other. (Winterson: 2001, 31).

Winterson can thus be seen to present "a critique of normative gender roles and 'compulsory heterosexuality'" (Andermahr: ibidem).

Butler argues that the sex of the body, gender cultural attributes and sexuality concerning desire and orientation are not coincidently connected; they are not "natural and innate categories but rather produced in and through discourse and performativity" (Salih: 2004, 134). If gender is assumed and if it is a reproduction that often creates the ideal it attempts to approximate, then gender is an act that can produce a false impression of "an inner sex or essence or psychic gender core" (Salih: 2004, 134).

Sexing the Cherry presents a variety of gender ambiguities; whereas the Dog Woman is seen as a transgressor of normative gender roles, Jordan represents a reserved and unselfish sexual man. He feels relieved from the oppressive binary of homosexuals and prostitutes, because he has acquired his own place in the world. Therefore, in Jordan's view, transvestism can be seen as a way of regaining freedom of thought and practices.

Chapter IV. – Conclusion

By using fantasy, the picaresque and the grotesque, Carter and Winterson present different approaches of the ideal imaginary world.

It is clearly shown in the novels analysed that both writers want to go beyond the established boundaries of the acceptable values of the modern world.

Carter's *The Passion of New Eve* is a cruel and overpowering narrative in which the author uses diverse motifs to engage the process of adaptation of Evelyn's new condition. This complex device of narrative exploration creates the appropriate atmosphere while engaging with the concept of the Bildungsroman of female development, which implies, as referred to previously, a break with "male norms" of the genre (Abel et al: 11).

At the end of *The Passion of New Eve*, the main character perceives that her search of the cinematic Tristessa was just a way to grow psychologically and then finally realises that she had always been searching for her lost self.

Winterson's sexually ambivalent Dog Woman is an icon that represents women's power over men. She actually tries to have sexual intercourse with men, but her monstrosity is a barrier for those who want to interact with her.

Jordan fights back against his undefined sexuality in order to conquer his own place in the world. At the end of the narrative, he finally understands that his double sexual condition is the perfect choice to live happily ever after, as in fairy tales and myths.

Carter's *Libretto* and Winterson's "Gift of Wings" with direct reference to Woolf's *Orlando,* intertextually present a putative explanation to the unsatisfied state of Jordan's sexuality. This character suffers a lot

during his quest narrative, because he does not fit clearly into either of the two genders. He goes through many experiences in order to find his most pleasurable condition that is known to be bisexuality. At the end of the novel, Jordan is happy because he has found the answer to his depressing dilemma.

The most significant issue that is addressed by Carter in this work is the finding of the lost part of one's double sexual condition. According to Aristophanes' myth included in Carter's *Libretto*, in the beginning of humankind, this double condition was considered as perfect. There were not issues concerning the dominion of one sex in relation to the other. Consequently, it was seen as a threat by the gods and so it was split up forever. In order to conquer his/her place in society, one must solve his/her gender ambiguity.

Winterson declared some years ago that she is a lesbian and she does not care about the acceptance of her sexual orientation. Some of her fictional work appears to suggest that there are always others ways of being truly happy and that heterosexuality is not compulsory, it is just one way through; there always are other options that one can embrace.

Carter and Winterson tried to develop this myth of gender metamorphosis in their ambiguous characters. Such hybrid literary novels try to create different environments concerning the duality between gender and performance.

Works Cited

Abel, Elizabeth et al. *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1983.

Agulló, Mercedes. *A Vueltas con El Autor Del Lazarillo: Con el Testamento y el Inventario de Bienes de Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza.* Madrid: S.L. Calambur Editorial, 2010.

Andermahr, Sonya. *Jeanette Winterson*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Braidotti, Rosi. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Trans. Helene Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.

Balsamo, Anne. *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women***.** Durham and London: Duke UP, 1996.

Barthes, Roland. *S/Z*. Trans. Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang, 1974.

Bartkowski, Frances. *Feminist Utopias*. Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1989.

Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Trans. and Ed. H. M. Parshley. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977.

Bjornson, Richard. *The Picaresque Hero in European Fiction*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1977.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory". in *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 4: 1988, pp. 519-531.

Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero's Journey: Joseph Campbell on His Life and Work*. ed. Phil Cousineau. New York: Harper and Row, 1990.

Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Novato: New World Library, 2008.

Carroll, John B. *Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1956.

Carter, Angela. *Angela Carter's Book of Fairytales*. London: Virago Press, 2005.

------. "Libretto – Orlando: or, The Enigma of the Sexes". in: *The Curious Room: Plays, Film Scripts and an Opera*. London: Vintage, 1997.

------. *The Bloody Chamber*. London: Vintage, 1995.

------. *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman*. London: Penguin Books, 1982.

------. *The Passion of New Eve*. London: Virago, 1996.

------. *The Sadeian Woman: An Exercise in Cultural History*. London: Virago, 1979.

Day, Aidan. *Angela Carter: The Rational Glass*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998.

Eliot, Thomas Stearns. *Collected Poems, 1909-1962 (The Centenary Edition)*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1991.

Evslin, Bernard. Heroes, *Gods and Monsters of the Greek Myths*. New York: Random House Inc., 2005.

Felski, Rita. *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.

Fiore, Robert L. *Lazarillo de Tormes*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984.

Frank, Arthur. *The wounded storyteller: Body illness and ethics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Freud, Sigmund, Gay, Peter (ed). *The Freud Reader*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989.

Frye, Northrop. *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature*. London: Ark, 1993.

Fuderer, Laura Sue. *The Female Bildungsroman in English: An annoted bibliography of Criticism.* New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1990.

Gamble, Sarah. *Angela Carter: Writing from the Front Line*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997.

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 6th ed. New York: MLA, 2003.

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *Herland*. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1998.

Grant, John and John Clute. *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy.* Berkshire: Orbit, 1997.

Gupta, Suman, Johnson, David. *A twentieth-century literature reader: texts and debates*. Oxon: Routledge, 2005.

Grice, Helena, Woods, Tim (ed). *I'm telling you stories: Jeanette Winterson and the Politics of Reading*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998.

Halberstam, Judith, Livingston, Ira (ed). *Posthuman Bodies*. Indiana University Press, 1995.

Hutcheon, Linda. *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction.* NY: Routledge, 2004, 105-123.

Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*. New York: HarperTorch, 2005.

Jackson, Rosemary. *Fantasy: the Literature of Subversion*. London: Methuen, 1981.

Jung, Carl. *The Undiscovered Self*. New York: New American Library, 2006.

King, James. *Virginia Woolf*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1994.

Kristeva, Julia, Clément, Catherine**.** *The Feminine and the Sacred*. Trans. J. M. Todd. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.

Lee, Alison. "Out of Eden: *The Passion of New Eve*". In: *Angela Carter*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997.

MacLeod, Catriona. *Embodying Ambiguity: Androgyny and Aesthetics from Winckelmann to Keller*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998.

Morgenstern, Karl. "Über das Wesen des Bildungsromans". in: Selbmann, Rolf. (ed.) *Zur Geschichte des deutschen Bildungsromans*. Darmstadt: Wiss Buchgesellschaft, 1988, 55-72.

Natoli, Joseph P. and Linda Hutcheon. *A Postmodern Reader*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1993, 243-263.

Nicolson, Nigel, Trautman, Joanne, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*. London: Hogarth Press, 1975-1984.

Oliveira, Maria Julieta de. *Playing with gender and sexual identity in Angela Carter's The Passion of New Eve and Rose Tremain's Sacred Country*. Universidade de Aveiro, 2003.

Onega, Susana. *Jeanette Winterson*. Manchester University Press, 2006.

Ott, Ludwig. *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma.* trans. Patrick Lynch. Tan Books and Publishers Inc., 1960.

Ovid. *Metamorphoses*. London: Penguin Books, 2004.

Patai, Daphne. *Heterophobia: Sexual Harassment and the Future of Feminism*. Maryland, USA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 1998.

Peach, Linden. *Angela Carter*. London: MacMillan, 1998.

Poole, Roger. *The Unknown Virginia Woolf*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.

Russ, Joanna et al. *Woman Space: Future and Fantasy Stories and Art by Women.* New Hampshire: New Victoria Publishers, 1981.

------. *The Female Man*. London: The Women's Press, 1994.

------. *To write like a woman: Essays in Feminism and Science Fiction / Joanna Russ*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.

Sackville-West, Vita. *Family History*. London: Virago Press Ltd, 1990.

Salih, Sarah. "Imitation and Gender Insubordination". in: *The Judith Butler Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004, 31–134.

Sargisson, Lucy. *Contemporary Feminist Utopianism*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein: Or the Modern Prometheus*. Ed. M. K. Joseph. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985.

Sexton, Anne. *Transformations*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1971.

Silver, Brenda R. *Virginia Woolf Icon*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Stein, Murray. *Jung's Map of the Soul: An Introduction*. Peru: Carus Publishing Company, 1998.

Trevenna, Joanne. "Gender as Performance: questioning the 'Butlerification' of Angela Carter's fiction". in: *Journal of Gender Studies* vol. 11. London: Routledge, 2002, 267–76.

Todorov, Tzvetan, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* trans R. Howard. Cornell University Press, 1975.

Tucker, Lindsey. *Critical Essays on Angela Carter*. New York: G. K. Hall & Co., 1998.

Walker, Stephen F. *Jung and the Jungians on Myth: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Warner, Marina. *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary*. London: Vintage, 2000.

------. *Fantastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds: Ways of Telling the Self.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Winterson, Jeanette. *Art objects: essays on ecstasy and effrontery*. London: Vintage, 1996.

------. *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*. Oxford: Heinemann, 1991.

------. *The Passion*. London: Penguin Books, 1987.

------. *Sexing the Cherry*. London: Vintage, 2001.

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas.* Oxford University Press, 1998.

------. *Orlando*. London: Penguin, 1993.

------. *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 3: 1925-1930. ed. Annie Olivier Bell. London: The Hogarth Press, 1977.

Zipes, Jack. *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*. New York: Routledge, 1983.

"Genesis". in: *Holy Bible*, New King James Version. Nashville: 1982.

"Exodus". in: *Holy Bible*, New King James Version. Nashville: 1982.

List of Illustrations